

After Math
Florence Nightingale,
1820–1910

Mary Alexandra Agner

Worth one thousand words, usually,
but thousands dead
were inked as a colored nautilus
with chambers counting corpses
by disease or sword or bullet.
Hold this shell to your ear;
hear only your heartbeat's echo.
Numbers never had such voice
until Florence drew
coxcomb wedges for the dead.

To the modern world,
pictures are not epiphanies.
Lump together all those bodies—
summed and graphed by hand—
and the nineteenth century
would ache with rot and TB
where today we see a piechart.

Nightingale, sing us the sweet song
of statistics, math made
to improve man's lot,
and of the sortie Dickens wrote,
his thousand thousand words
to overthrow your picture.
Sing up the ghosts of war
to we who are inured to what remains
after explosives and machine-gun fire.

Sketch the rows and columns of us, now,
that we might see ourselves
and plot to change.

MARY ALEXANDRA AGNER is a technical writer currently living in Somerville, Massachusetts. She earned a master of earth and planetary science degree in 1998 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a master of fine arts degree in 2003 at Emerson College (Boston). Her first book of poetry was published by Mayapple Press in summer 2009.



REUTERS/ERIC-GAILLARD

ACCELERATE the online peer review process with SCHOLARONE MANUSCRIPTS

More scholarly publishers and societies trust ScholarOne Manuscripts than any other solution for online submission and peer review. Why?

Because it's fast, accurate, and easy to configure.

And because you get much more than software. You get the full support of a professional team dedicated to improving and streamlining your workflow. As well as the complementary resources and technology of Thomson Reuters, the world's leading source of intelligent information for businesses and professionals.

From start to finish, we bring you the best submission and peer review workflow process available in the market.

365 PUBLISHERS & SOCIETIES • 3,400 JOURNALS
13 MILLION USERS AND GROWING • 1.3 MILLION ANNUAL SUBMISSIONS

Find more information at www.scholarone.com



THOMSON REUTERS™